

MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

February 7, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Place: MDOT 1st floor auditorium

Commission Members Present:

MS Department of Corrections	Chris Epps
MS Department of Information Technology Services	David Litchliter
MS Department of Transportation	Willie Huff
MS Dept of Public Safety	Charlie Williams
MS Department of Environmental Quality	Keith Harkins
MS Department of Homeland Security	Jay Ledbetter
MS Supervisors Association	Joel Yelverton
MS Department of Health	Mike Scales
MS National Guard	Harold Cross
MS Emergency Management Agency	Tom McAllister
MS Police Chiefs' Association	Tommy Moffett
MS Fire Chiefs' Association	Tom Lariviere
MS Municipal League	Quincy Mukaro
Safe City Initiative	Mark McCreery

Advisory Members Present:

Representative Tyrone Ellis

Vice-Chairman Chris Epps called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Tom McAllister made the motion, and it was seconded by Keith Harkins. The motion passed with none opposed.

Commissioner Epps recognized Charlie Williams and welcomed him as a member of the Wireless Communication Commission. Commissioner Epps also recognized the new members of the Advisory Board.

Joel Yelverton reported for the Procurement Review Committee. The Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) presented their request for radios and equipment for 5 aircraft at an approximate cost of \$65,000.00 to the Procurement Review Committee. Joel explained that since this project was not in the FY08 plan approved by the WCC September 6, 2007, the project had to come before the WCC for approval. Joel Yelverton made a motion to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Tom Lariviere. The motion passed with none opposed. Mr. Yelverton indicated that procurement rules would be reviewed with ITS for potential changes and any changes will go through the Administrative Procedures Act allowing 30 days for comment.

Willie Huff reported for the Interoperability Committee. For the benefit of the new WCC and Advisory Board members, Mr. Huff gave a brief overview of the statewide radio system project. Mr. Huff explained that phase 1A of the project was being carved out to expedite implementation of the radio system in the 6 southern counties. Mr. Huff further explained that the Committee was charged with ensuring that the statewide system can interoperate with existing legacy systems throughout the state.

Discussion ensued concerning reactions throughout the state from the locals. Tom McAllister stated that in some of the conferences he attended he had heard some misconceptions being discussed about the statewide project. Mr. McAllister asked if a newsletter or a web site might help more clearly disseminate information about this project to better encourage local participation. Representative Ellis expressed concerns that with the struggle to make sure all bodies were represented on the Commission during the bill formulation phase, there did not seem to be adequate information going back to the areas being represented by the WCC members. Various members of the Commission reported on efforts to provide information on MSWIN within their associations. Commissioner Epps suggested a newsletter be sent to all of the associations represented by members of the WCC.

Willie Huff reported for the Governance Committee. The Governance Committee has established the first of several advisory groups to work on issues that have surfaced during governance meetings. The advisory groups will work to establish rules governing agencies and locals coming on the system, expectations, fee structures, utilization of existing equipment, and costs to offset impact on the statewide system.

Bill Buffington gave an update on the projects. The Rapid Deployment System has been completed with 9 sites (including FEMA sites and the 3 SOWS) in South Mississippi along evacuation routes. The only negative feedback received to date has been concerning the size of the subscriber units. The MSWIN project is moving along with site procurement. Only two sites are lacking for Phase I, and approximately 30% of Phase II sites have been acquired. The project is 18 months ahead of schedule. Equipment was originally scheduled to ship in 2010, but equipment is currently being manufactured and staged for shipping to begin in March 2008. It is anticipated that Phase 1A will be operational by June, the beginning of the 2008 hurricane season. Mr. Buffington gave a presentation about the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) project, which received WCC approval to purchase its own equipment. Prior to MSWIN, DMR subscribers were not getting the coverage they needed with their system. DMR and the WCC worked together to consolidate equipment, utilize FEMA's tower sites, and reconfigure the statewide system spur design into a loop to provide bi-directional traffic in the event a path is lost in the system. DMR now has adequate coverage with communications capability up to 18 miles south of the Barrier Islands. The consolidation and tower configuration changes resulted in \$4 million in credits for the MSWIN project.

Mr. Buffington has recently begun researching the possibility of an interactive web site to provide information about the MSWIN project as well as an e-Newsletter to be transmitted electronically and printed for distribution.

Major General Harold Cross asked about the build-out plan for the statewide system and suggested that consideration be given to the next phase being built in the potentially volatile area of the New Madrid fault. Mr. Buffington explained that the original plan was to build out from South to North in three phases, South, Central, and

North. Mr. Buffington agreed that changes in the project schedule to address this risk should be considered further. Willie Huff explained that system implementation was designed in phases because of funding considerations. He indicated that if the funding were concrete, multiple phases could be deployed simultaneously.

Mr. Buffington expressed his willingness to continue providing assistance with this project at the WCC's direction after the departure of Commissioner Phillips.

Commissioner Epps asked what challenges the WCC faced with the implementation of the statewide system. Mr. Buffington responded that PR with local entities and other state agencies was needed to achieve buy-in, and that challenges also existed with funding, especially if the implementation continues ahead of schedule. Lee County is ready to proceed with a system and needs to be considered in concert with the statewide system implementation. Commissioner Epps indicated that work was being done on possible funding. Commissioner Epps offered staff from his communications department to assist with the newsletter mentioned by Mr. Buffington.

David Litchliter provided the members with a handout of the monthly expenses, and stated that a more detailed breakdown could be provided if needed. Larger expenditures were incurred in January due to the achievement of milestones in the statewide radio implementation project. These milestones were validated by the State team with help from BGA. Mr. Huff made a motion to approve the expenditures, and it was seconded by Tommy Moffett. The motion passed with none opposed.

David Litchliter provided an update on the procurement to acquire Independent Verification and Validation/Quality Assurance consulting services for the implementation of the MSWIN project. Proposals were received from RCC Consultants and Buford Goff & Associates, Inc. (BGA). While both vendors met the technical requirements outlined in the Letter of Configuration, BGA had the lowest cost and exceeded the minimum experience requirements to a greater extent than RCC. Mr. Yelverton made a motion to award the contract to BGA, and it was seconded by Tom McAllister. The motion passed with none opposed.

Mr. Litchliter stated that a new Chairman needed to be appointed. According to Robert's Rules of Order, which the WCC adopted as the rules for conducting meetings, the Vice-Chairman can be moved to the Chairman position if the Chairman does not serve out the full term. Mr. Litchliter made a motion to move Commissioner Epps to the Chairman position and to announce that a vote will be taken at the next meeting to fill the Vice-Chairman position. The motion was seconded by Tom McAllister. Keith Harkins asked when the Chairman term expired and Mr. Litchliter indicated that internal rules or bylaws were not established concerning terms. After that discussion, the motion passed with none opposed. Commission and Advisory members complimented Commissioner Epps on his leadership skills and his tenure in State government.

The next meeting will be March 6, 2008, in the 10th floor conference room at MDOT. The meeting adjourned at 2:32 PM.